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IAD - 60/66
7 July 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Far East Division, DD/P
THROUGH : Deputy Director for Intelligence
THROUGH : Director of Photographic Intelligence, CIA
FROM : Chief, Imagery Analysis Division, CIA
SUBJECT : IAD Comments on the Proposal for a Target Center
in Southeast Asia

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1. I have been following closely and with considerable interest the developments concerning [redacted] proposal for a Target Center in Southeast Asia. At the outset may I say the proposal is not without merit; however, I do have serious reservations concerning the practicality of this proposal in answering the short range needs of DDP/FE in Laos and to a lesser extent the long range needs of the Agency in having its own reconnaissance/exploitation capability. Essentially, both the short range and long range needs of the Agency can be met by the adoption of a concept based on an air relocatable system - a system of air transportable vans designed to provide a photo processing and exploitation capability in forward field areas. Such a system is operational and presently in use by the military. A major drawback in [redacted] proposal is the lack of mobility and recoverability of the total assets envisioned. There is relatively little problem involved in relocating aircraft and personnel; the matter of moving the assets of a photo processing and exploitation facility is indeed another story unless a van concept is followed.

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2. Since the Imagery Analysis Division has provided DD/P with photo interpretation support for a number of years, our senior officers have developed a good comprehension of the needs of DD/P in any given situation where photo reconnaissance/exploitation is involved. Our collective judgement in the particular situation of the Laotian panhandle is that the situation requires a measured augmentation of the photo interpretation (PI) support now being given. Before discussing augmentation of the PI support [redacted] however, a comment on [redacted] is necessary.

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When considering the system inputs of photo/visual [redacted] and airborne radio direction finder (ARDF), we are firmly convinced that the photo/visual input is the most important - and certainly the most responsive to the immediate needs of DDP/FE in the

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25X1D Laotian panhandle dilemma. While acknowledging the great potential of [redacted] and ARDF we presently feel these sensor systems are intended to supplement rather than supplant current conventional photographic reconnaissance systems. As these [redacted] become more operationally reliable and significantly productive in terms of information produced -- they most assuredly should be considered in any reconnaissance program based on [redacted] surveillance.

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25X1A 3. I have been interested for some time in the possibilities afforded by the air-transportable van concept, and senior IAD personnel have visited such installations in the field and have been working closely with qualified MPIC/CIA personnel toward a more efficient unit. Given the impetus of a [redacted] priority, the Agency could probably have operational in the field a van-housed PI exploitation unit within 60 to 90 days and a van-housed photo lab within 90 to 120 days. The cogency of the van concept is that such units are available and could be equipped to our specifications within a relatively short period of time.

If a suitable plot of land was made accessible, vans could be flown in (Via C-124, C-130 or G-133) and made operational within one day of their arrival. Other vans would provide the electrical power, administrative space and chemical/film storage space required.

25X1A Concerning PI support [redacted] our present posture would permit us to augment within a 2 to 3 month period the PI effort to a total [redacted] 25X1A [redacted] photo interpreters including a senior IAD supervisor if a working area was made available.

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25X1A 4. I've appointed [redacted] to represent this division in all matters relating to [redacted] proposal for a Target Center in Southeast Asia. In addition to serving [redacted] he is also available, as are other IAD or MPIC officers, at any time if further elaboration is desired. A 5-minute briefing could be prepared to highlight the advantages of an air relocatable system based on the use of vans. Such a system, designed and monitored by appropriate MPIC/CIA components, could provide the Agency in the field, by our best estimates, with a dependable and productive PI exploitation asset within 60 to 90 days, and a self-contained photo lab ready to accept all multisensor inputs within 90 to 120 days.

25X1A 5. In regards to [redacted] proposal we have not temporized; this memorandum reflects a collective value judgement of the division's most experienced intelligence officers and suggests, what I believe, is a most practical solution for tactical intelligence analysis of the Laotian panhandle.

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